Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water for the Organization of the Amendment Conference

PTBT/CONF/M/SR.7
13 June 1990
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 4 June 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka)

CONTENTS

General exchange of views (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

90-55658 2526S (E)

/...

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued) (PTBT/CONF/M/3 and 6)

1. Ms. MASON (Canada) said that the negotiation of an effective comprehensive test-ban treaty remained a fundamental Canadian arms control objective. Her delegation believed that such a treaty should be verifiable. In addition, it should be negotiated on a step-by-step basis and must be based on solid foundations with obligations clearly delineated and understood and equally clearly embraced.

2. Canada was pleased to note the signing the previous week by Presidents Bush and Gorbachev of verification protocols for the threshold test-ban Treaty of 1974 and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty of 1976 which would allow for the ratification of those two agreements. Her delegation looked forward to the early resumption of negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on further restrictions on nuclear testing.

3. Multilateralism also had a prominent role to play in the quest for a comprehensive test-ban Treaty. Regrettably, consideration of the issue by the Conference on Disarmament had been hampered for several years by lack of agreement on a mandate for an ad hoc Committee. It was important that the impasse be overcome as soon as possible and that substantive consideration of the issue be resumed in that forum, which counted among its members all five nuclear-weapon States.

4. Canada co-sponsored an annual resolution at the General Assembly entitled "Urgent need for a comprehensive test-ban treaty". In its view, the resolution outlined a realistic programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament, which could lead towards the conclusion of a treaty. Canada's commitment to the goal of a comprehensive test-ban treaty was also demonstrated in the research it conducted in the area of verification relevant to a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In 1989, the Canadian Government had completed work on the upgrading of its seismic detection facilities in Yellowknife, in the Canadian north, at a cost of 3.5 million Canadian dollars. Canadian scientists used that and other Canadian and global seismograph facilities to undertake research on the detection and identification of underground nuclear explosions.

5. She was pleased to note that agreement had already been reached on most of the issues which were to be considered at the current Meeting. The conciliatory approach demonstrated by delegations and their willingness to take into account the concerns of others augured well for the Amendment Conference scheduled for January.

6. Canada believed that the Amendment Conference had the potential to build on common ground among the parties and to provide a fresh impetus to work towards the goal of a comprehensive test ban, particularly at the Conference on Disarmament. Several delegations had already referred to the suggestion, which her delegation considered interesting and constructive, of establishing a sub-committee to examine verification of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. That sub-committee could

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

synthesize information from a variety of sources concerning the technical parameters of a verification régime which could generate the necessary confidence in the Treaty.

7. Her delegation pledged its continuing co-operation in ensuring at the present Meeting that the January Conference would start on the best possible footing, and it would take advantage of that Conference to move the collective efforts forward towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban Treaty.

8. Mr. GOLOVKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the achievement of a general and complete ban on nuclear tests was one of the priority goals of Soviet foreign policy. Prompt achievement of that goal would place a solid roadblock in the way of the qualitative improvement of weapons and the development of new weapon systems and would help to strengthen the international non-proliferation régime; it would also help to improve the environment, not only in the nuclear-weapon States, but throughout the world.

9. His delegation was convinced that efforts directed at the achievement of a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests must be undertaken at both the multilateral and the bilateral level. As the first seven years of the past decade had demonstrated, the policy of "all or nothing" could not lead to the achievement of that goal. In those circumstances, although the newly-engaged Soviet-American negotiations were proceeding step by step, they none the less constituted a start in that direction. The recent signing in Washington of the protocols on verification of the 1974 and 1976 Treaties was only a first step in the full-scale negotiations. In September 1988, the then President of the United States, in a letter to the United States Congress, had pointed out that the United States would be prepared, immediately following ratification of those Treaties, to move on to talks on the further limitation of nuclear tests with a view to ultimately banning them. At a meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the United States in 1990, the American party had reaffirmed the commitment to the obligations undertaken by the previous Administration. The Soviet party had expressed the hope that the talks would be resumed in the near future without artificial interruptions and delays. The Soviet Union was prepared, for its part, provided that its partners were in agreement, to reduce the number of stages in the bilateral step-by-step negotiations by concluding the first stage right away and to move on immediately to the phase of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

10. The specific mechanisms pertaining to the Treaties of 1974 and 1976 not only provided for ratification of those treaties but also laid the foundation for the machinery for verification of possible future far-reaching limitation of resting and of a test ban, and included primarily those elements pertaining to seismic methods of verification and on-site inspection.

11. While fully supporting the multilateral efforts which were being made in the field of a comprehensive test ban, the USSR, together with a number of other countries, had introduced at the Conference on Disarmament in June 1987 some draft fundamental provisions for a treaty on a general and complete ban on

READEX FICHE

(Mr. Golovko, USSR)

nuclear-weapon tests. The Soviet party was in favour of the prompt establishment of an ad hoc committee of the Conference and hoped that the compromise that had been worked out at the spring session of the Conference would result in an agreed mandate for the committee and that the conference would be able to get down to practical consideration of the issues relating to a comprehensive test ban in the summer.

12. His delegation had supported and continued to support the proposal to extend application of the 1963 Treaty on underground nuclear tests, which would be one possible way of achieving the ultimate goal, namely, a comprehensive test ban.

13. In the view of the Soviet Union, a moratorium on tests could be a very useful measure which could contribute to the conclusion of a test-ban treaty. The Soviet Union was prepared to declare a moratorium again at any time, provided that the United States also declared a moratorium on a mutual basis.

14. The Soviet Union was prepared to consider all verification measures, without exception, which could promote confidence that a comprehensive test-ban agreement would be observed, including a seismic verification system, verification of radioactivity in the air and on-site inspection. It was entirely possible that suitable elements of the verification mechanisms relating to the 1974 and 1976 Treaties might be used for that purpose.

15. His delegation welcomed the preliminary agreement reached on the agenda for the Conference and took the following position on organizational issues for the preparatory meeting. With regard to voting, participants in the Conference should make every effort to adopt decisions by consensus, save where amendment proposal was directly concerned, in which case decisions should be taken in accordance with article II of the 1963 Treaty. Constructive participation by non-governmental organizations in the Conference would be welcomed. Naturally, they should not participate on any kind of special footing which would place them above the United Nations for example. In the view of his delegation, the issue of how many committees should be established should depend on the substance of the amendment proposal as a whole. He expressed the hope that the sponsors of the amendment would submit as soon as possible any missing elements of their proposal to the States parties for consideration.

16. Concerning documentation he strongly urged that preparation of any documents should not exceed the limits of the estimates for that item (see document PTBT/CONF/M/4). It seemed that, in addition to basic documents (for example, primarily those listed under items 1, 4 and 5 of document PTBT/CONF/M/6), it would be useful for participants to have a reference list of the various types of prepared and distributed documents as soon as possible, giving a historical review of the role of a comprehensive test ban in contributing to the cessation of the arms race and dealing with related issues.

(Mr. Golovko, USSR)

17. With regard to specific issues directly related to the amendment proposal and its consideration, the Soviet delegation was willing to make a statement after seeing all the elements of the amendment proposal as a whole. The Soviet Union was prepared to work constructively and to spare no effort to advance to the final goal of a general and complete ban on nuclear tests.

18. Mr. NOREEN (Sweden) said that over the years his country had been a strong advocate of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. In 1982 Sweden had made a proposal concerning a comprehensive test-ban treaty in the then Committee on Disarmament. His country's commitment had also been demonstrated through its co-sponsoring of General Assembly resolutions calling for the speedy conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

19. A nuclear-test ban would effectively contribute to halting the nuclear-arms race. Any partial or gradual approach to testing should be linked to the early conclusion of such a treaty. Since nuclear weapons posed a threat to all States, nuclear disarmament should be dealt with at the global, multilateral level. That in no way diminished the importance of bilateral agreements. Bilateral and multilateral action on arms reduction and disarmament should complement and reinforce each other. The dialogue between the two major Powers and the rapid change in international relations constituted a favourable basis for renewed multilateral disarmament efforts.

A comprehensive test ban would be instrumental in checking both vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. It was therefore a source of disappointment that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva had not yet been entrusted with the task of concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The Geneva machinery should at last be set in motion through the speedy adoption of a mandate for an ad hoc committee on the nuclear-test ban.

20. The argument concerning a purported lack of sufficient comprehensive test-ban verification techniques had been refuted by the important results achieved by experts. Verification appeared to be a political rather than a technical issue. The advanced work within the seismic field carried out by the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts in the Conference on Disarmament should be supplemented by systematic work by the group on co-operative verification arrangements.

21. There was a clear need for background documentation. His delegation was of the view that the Secretariat should also be able to draw upon documentation that had been prepared or was being prepared for other purposes. The ongoing United Nations study on nuclear weapons was expected to appear well in advance of the Conference and would, it was hoped, contain material relating to the Amendment Conference.

22. Lastly, Sweden was prepared to assume its share of the costs for the Conference on the basis of the agreed financial arrangements, including both assessed and voluntary contributions.

23. Mr. AHMED (Pakistan) said that the recent improvement in the international situation had generated an atmosphere of optimism and hope all over the world. Mankind could now look to a more secure future, free from the threat of nuclear destruction.

24. It was of vital importance that the efforts leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems must be continued and intensified. If the necessary political will existed, problems of a technical nature did not present insurmountable hurdles to the conclusion of disarmament agreements. There was an urgent need today for measures such as a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

25. The 1963 partial test-ban Treaty provided that the three nuclear Powers would seek "to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time" and that they "were determined to continue negotiations to this end". The General Assembly approved the Treaty in resolution 1910 (XVIII). Since then, regrettably, there had not been much progress in that direction and underground nuclear testing continued.

26. At all three non-proliferation treaty review conferences in 1975, 1980 and 1985 the non-nuclear States, particularly the neutral and non-aligned States, had emphasized the importance of article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty.

27. At the 1980 review Conference, the then Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had stated that the non-proliferation régime could survive only on the threefold basis of the non-proliferation Treaty, effective international safeguards and a comprehensive test-ban treaty. A report submitted the same year on behalf of the Secretary-General by a group of experts at the request of the General Assembly had concluded that a comprehensive test ban could serve as an important measure for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, both vertical and horizontal. In his foreword to the report, the Secretary-General had stressed the vital importance of a total test ban as an indispensable first step towards halting the nuclear-arms race. He had concluded by saying that all technical and scientific aspects had been so carefully explored that only a political decision was necessary to achieve agreement. The need for a comprehensive test ban had also been underscored at the 1989 Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries in Belgrade.

28. Pakistan had time and again reaffirmed at the highest level its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, had made repeated calls for a moratorium on nuclear testing and had supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in various parts of the world. Pakistan's own proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia was designed to keep the region free of nuclear weapons. His country had also proposed the conclusion of a regional or bilateral nuclear-test-ban agreement.

29. The Meeting provided an invaluable opportunity for carrying out the necessary groundwork and enabling States parties to work together in a constructive spirit towards the ultimate aim of convening the Amendment Conference to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

30. Mr. GHAREKHAN (India) said that his country had signed the partial test-ban Treaty on the first day that it had been opened for signature. India was fully committed to the provisions of the Treaty and considered that a comprehensive test-ban treaty would be the single most far-reaching measure for curbing the nuclear-arms race, an important nuclear-disarmament measure and a step towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

31. As early as 1954 Jawaharlal Nehru had made an appeal in the General Assembly for halting nuclear-weapon tests. India had supported the call for an Amendment Conference in view of the great importance that it attached to a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Although the partial test-ban Treaty had been unanimously regarded as the first step towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty, it had not led to the halting of the quantitative or qualitative nuclear-arms race. Since the first nuclear test, conducted by the United States on 6 July 1945, up to 1 January 1990, 1,828 more tests had been carried out. At the current time, nuclear-weapon testing related to the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons. The working paper "New technologies and the qualitative arms race", submitted by India at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1988 contained a description of emerging technologies, including new, "third generation" nuclear weapons.

32. The active participation of all nuclear-weapon States was necessary in order to ensure the effectiveness of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Although there had been progress in arms control between the United States and the Soviet Union, none of the agreements concluded by them prohibited the upgrading of existing weapon systems.

33. Peaceful nuclear explosions had always been considered a separate issue. The original intention at that time of the negotiations on the partial test-ban Treaty was clearly to maintain a dividing line between nuclear explosions for military purposes, which were to be prohibited entirely, and nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, which were to be allowed under certain conditions. Doubts had been expressed in recent years about the utility of peaceful nuclear explosions. However, it was not as if the last word had been said on the subject with any authority. The amendment proposal submitted by Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Yugoslavia would be examined by all the States parties to the Treaty prior to the Amendment Conference in January 1991. Meanwhile, it would be useful to know how that proposal would relate to existing international instruments which contained provisions for peaceful nuclear explosions: would those provisions continue to remain in force or would they be annulled after the amendment of the partial test-ban Treaty?

34. India believed that all multilateral, collective endeavours should be pursued on the basis of adherence to established norms and practices, of which the United Nations was the obvious fountainhead. Its activities also served as a guiding light for conferences such as the forthcoming one. His delegation felt that the United Nations scale of assessment for all delegations, without exception, was the only basis for sharing the costs of the Amendment Conference.

35. Mr. RANA (Nepal) said that everyone agreed that a comprehensive test-ban treaty would have an immense positive impact on efforts to solve the problem of nuclear disarmament. The three nuclear-weapon States had acknowledged that in the partial test-ban Treaty. The two leading nuclear Powers were currently engaged in bilateral talks on nuclear tests. For the first time in many years, the international community saw hope for drastic reductions and the ultimate destruction of nuclear weapons.

36. His Government firmly believed that a ban on all nuclear-weapon tests would de-escalate the nuclear-arms race and reduce the risk of nuclear war. It also considered that a comprehensive test ban would be a valuable complement to reductions in nuclear arsenals. Since nuclear testing fuelled the nuclear-arms race, a gradual approach to that issue was not acceptable to the majority of the members of the international community.

37. He also believed that only a treaty that was global in scope and verifiable could be really effective in banning nuclear-weapon tests. Like many other countries, Nepal held the view that the question of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban should be dealt with in a multilateral body. It was regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament had failed to assume responsibility in that matter. Taking account of that fact and in view of its disagreement with the step-by-step approach, Nepal had joined those who had called for the Amendment Conference.

38. Lack of an effective verification mechanism was the most formidable argument against the speedy conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Nevertheless, the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts on seismic events had covered much ground in that regard. A verification mechanism, furthermore, was provided for under the 1987 Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. Pioneering work in that field was being carried out by various Member States and the Secretary-General was to submit a report to the General Assembly on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. Nepal, of course, understood the problems involved and respected the concerns of some nuclear-weapon States. But the fact remained that verification had become a question of political will rather than of technical difficulties.

39. The structure of the Amendment Conference was another important issue. His delegation favoured keeping the subsidiary bodies of the Conference to an absolute minimum. On the other hand, the Conference would benefit from active participation by the relevant specialized agencies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Non-governmental organizations played an important role in creating a favourable world public opinion on disarmament. In that connection, he paid tribute to the work carried out by the Parliamentarians for Global Action.

40. With regard to the question of documentation, while his delegation agreed on the need for some background information materials, it felt that a maximum effort should be made to utilize available materials before undertaking the preparation of new ones. That would be a sure way of having a cost-effective Conference.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

41. The challenge before the Conference was to reach an agreement of a global nature, which would command the allegiance of all nuclear-weapon States, including those which were not parties to the partial test-ban Treaty. As had been pointed out by the delegation of the United Kingdom, the task before the Amendment Conference was a simple one and therefore should be carried out without fuss and at a minimum cost. The simple objective, however, would obviously not lend itself to a simple solution. The world community could not allow the Conference to end in failure.

42. Mr. AYALA LASSO (Ecuador) said that, consistently carrying out its foreign policy, Ecuador had been a sponsor of the draft resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1989, which reflected the desire of States to continue on the course towards the peaceful development of the community of nations.

43. It was well known that any loophole in nuclear-test-ban agreements made it possible to improve nuclear-weapon systems, encouraged their horizontal proliferation and ultimately posed a threat to international peace and security. Although the partial test-ban Treaty had been a positive step in protecting the environment, it had not eliminated the possibility itself of conducting nuclear tests.

44. Today one could not deny the negative effect of nuclear tests on the environment, yet the calls for the complete cessation of such tests were being ignored as in the past. Noting that a number of important agreements putting an end to the "cold war" had recently been concluded, he expressed the hope that the new climate in international relations would have a favourable impact on the work of the upcoming Conference.

45. In January 1991, it would be necessary to take a decision on a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. Furthermore, the nuclear-weapon States should declare, unilaterally or collectively, a moratorium on nuclear tests. Having completely prohibited nuclear testing, mankind would have assumed responsibility for the world in which it lived.

46. Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) said that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would promote genuine nuclear disarmament and ensure a real régime of non-proliferation both vertical and horizontal. It had not been possible to adopt by consensus either the proposal to hold the Amendment Conference, contained in General Assembly resolution 44/106 of 15 December 1989, or the 1963 Treaty. Many countries, including two nuclear-weapon States, had not yet signed the Treaty and more than 40 States had yet to accede to it. One of the goals of the Amendment Conference, thus, would be to achieve an international consensus on the Treaty.

47. To that end, careful consideration should be given to the proposal to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. That exercise would not be easy and it was necessary to lay a solid basis for solving that and other global problems which were of universal concern: the international economic situation, the environment and the scourge of illegal drugs. The work of the Conference should consist, not in the mechanical consideration of the draft

(Mr. Marin Bosch, Mexico)

amendment and voting on it, but rather in identifying existing obstacles and finding ways to overcome them. To do so, it was necessary to know in detail the positions of the States parties to the Treaty, particularly the three depositaries, on a broad range of issues, including verification, which, undoubtedly, would be a central topic.

48. With regard to the organization of the Conference, participation should be open to all countries, the intergovernmental organizations concerned such as IAEA and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), and non-governmental organizations. An appropriate mechanism for listening to their views was also necessary. Moreover, it would be advisable to establish a single subsidiary body - a committee of the whole chaired by the president of the Conference - for focusing discussion on the following three questions: an international verification system, including the monitoring of compliance with existing and proposed test bans and of potential technological advances in the field; measures to ensure universal accession to the Treaty; and nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes.

49. Mr. MICU (Romania) said that the Amendment Conference must be a decisive step towards achieving the complete "discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time", in accordance with the goal to which the three nuclear Powers that were parties to the 1963 Treaty had committed themselves.

50. That goal had not only legal, but also great political importance for halting the nuclear-arms race, achieving nuclear disarmament and strengthening the non-proliferation régime. For a quarter of a century, the world had not come closer to the attainment of that objective. That situation called for intensified efforts to achieve the complete prohibition of nuclear tests. In view of the different international situation and the discussion and implementation of nuclear disarmament measures by the two super-Powers, such a prohibition was both necessary and feasible.

51. It was necessary because it would be a convincing demonstration of the political will of the nuclear Powers to put an end to the nuclear-arms race. An agreement to halt all nuclear tests was feasible because in the period since the signing of the partial test-ban Treaty the means for detecting nuclear explosions had become so advanced that, according to most authoritative scientific estimates, even explosions of very low magnitude could hardly be concealed.

52. Having accepted the principle of achieving that objective in stages, Romania welcomed any agreement on the limitation of underground nuclear tests. The adoption of an additional protocol to the 1963 Treaty or the negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty would promote the cause of prohibiting all nuclear tests. The Amendment Conference could and should give a political impetus to the efforts to halt all nuclear tests.

(Mr. Micu, Romania)

53. In addition to holding the Conference, it was necessary to intensify efforts made elsewhere as well. With that in mind, Romania supported the establishment, at the forthcoming summer session of the Conference on Disarmament, of a special committee on the prohibition of nuclear tests, and the initiation in that framework of negotiations leading to concrete steps towards agreement.

54. In view of the substantive differences of views between the nuclear Powers and non-nuclear countries that were parties to the 1963 Treaty, in order to achieve the goal of the Conference it was extremely important to ensure an appropriate climate favourable to the search for constructive solutions and the intensification of talks on the prohibition of all nuclear tests. In that connection, it was necessary to do the utmost to take decisions by consensus at both the current Meeting and the Amendment Conference.

55. In dealing with organizational matters, it was advisable to follow the practice of the review conferences of the States parties to the non-proliferation Treaty and the sea-bed Treaty.

56. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that her country's strong commitment to the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty that would ban nuclear tests by all States in all environments for all time, was demonstrated by the fact that Australia submitted annually a resolution for consideration by the General Assembly entitled "Urgent need for a comprehensive test-ban treaty". For that reason, Australia had attempted to reach agreement on a mandate in the Conference on Disarmament making it possible to work towards achieving a comprehensive test ban. Her country believed that the Conference on Disarmament was the appropriate forum for conducting such negotiations.

57. Frustration at the lack of progress in that respect within the Conference on Disarmament was the reason why a number of States had supported the proposal to hold an Amendment Conference. Nevertheless, the Amendment Conference should not set about establishing an alternate forum. Nor should it focus solely on the question of amending the Treaty. It should concentrate on broad approaches that would promote negotiations on an effective and fully verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty.

58. A number of speakers had referred to the inadequacy of the Treaty and had questioned its importance. It was inadequate only because it did not ensure a comprehensive test ban; nevertheless, it made an important contribution to non-proliferation and the prevention of a wide range of nuclear tests as well as radioactive pollution of the sea, the atmosphere and outer space. As a country which itself had been subjected to radioactive contamination by nuclear tests conducted in the region, it knew the importance of the Treaty and hoped that all States that had not yet done so, particularly nuclear-weapon States, would accede to it.

(Ms. Courtney, Australia)

59. If agreement was reached on the establishment of a subsidiary body during the Conference, it would be appropriate to entrust it with the consideration of the three crucial issues for a comprehensive test ban: verification (including seismic monitoring), the scope of the treaty and compliance. That would help give impetus to the negotiation of a comprehensive test ban. The draft rules of procedure could leave sufficient flexibility for the Conference itself to decide on the establishment of such a body.

60. Australia agreed with regard to the need for a range of documentation covering issues related to the work of the Conference. Prior to the Admendment Conference, it would be useful to reissue certain documents and lacunae could be filled by both a reference list and a supplementary document to cover any outstanding issues. Australia also supported the participation of non-governmental organizations and specialized agencies in the Conference in accordance with the generally agreed principles for participation at disarmament review conferences.

61. The historic agreements between two nuclear-weapon countries on the reduction of nuclear weapons, the limitation of nuclear testing, and chemical weapons should give impetus not only to further bilateral agreements in the field of disarmament, but also to multilateral negotiations on that question.

62. Mr. HOLGER (Chile) said that the international community was today undergoing a process of change. The old security doctrines were becoming irrelevant. One of the characteristic attributes of the "cold war" - nuclear deterrence - was also losing its significance.

63. His Government considered that a comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test ban was a corner-stone of nuclear disarmament. Such a ban could halt the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Under those circumstances, it was more than ever necessary to amend the 1963 Treaty. The intention of the initial parties to the Treaty to achieve a complete ban on nuclear testing had not yet been achieved and the new climate in international relations had not yet had an impact on the process of nuclear disarmament.

64. The amendment process should be carried out in stages. Work should begin by defining the concepts and characteristics of an adequate verification system under a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. That process should be reinforced by measures to strengthen existing international agreements and by the political will of the nuclear Powers.

65. With regard to organizational questions, he pointed out the need to seek to adopt decisions by consensus, without introducing elements that might undermine efforts to achieve a complete ban on nuclear tests. His delegation expressed gratitude to Mexico for its untiring work in that area and was ready to do everything to promote the successful conclusion of the process that had begun.

66. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the participants at the Meeting agreed to set up two working groups - on the draft rules of procedure and on background and other documentation.

67. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at noon.

Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water for the Organization of the Amendment Conference

PTBT/CONF/M/SR.8
7 June 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 4 June 1990, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka)

CONTENTS

General exchange of views (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued) (PTBT/CONF/M/3 and 6)

1. Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela) said that the Meeting was being held at a particularly favourable time in international relations, when confrontation between the super-Powers was increasingly giving way to co-operation. The frequent contacts between the leaders of the two countries, such as the summit meeting recently held at Washington, D.C., had led to the signing of major agreements in the field of arms control and disarmament.

2. Although modest progress had been made, the trend could not be described as irreversible. There were still many obstacles to overcome, including the insistence of the nuclear Powers on maintaining some nuclear capacity as an instrument of their controversial policy of deterrence, which condemned mankind to continue living under the threat of a nuclear holocaust. Accordingly, the eradication of the risk of nuclear war, remained the most pressing task facing the international community.

3. Like the majority of other countries, Venezuela believed that the most effective means of halting and reversing the nuclear arms race was the conclusion, at an early date, of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban treaty. Despite extensive discussions, it had not been possible to undertake substantive efforts towards that goal, as evidenced by the stalled deliberations of the Conference on Disarmament.

4. The conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would prevent the development of new nuclear-weapon systems to replace those eliminated under the existing or future disarmament agreements. His country objected to the idea that a nuclear-test ban should be viewed as a long-term objective, to be implemented only after major reductions in the existing nuclear arsenals. Such a narrow approach would allow the continued development of ever-more sophisticated nuclear weapons. Hence, the aim was not to limit nuclear testing, but to achieve the discontinuance of all nuclear tests in all environments for all time. For that reason, his country had joined with others in sponsoring the proposed amendment (PTBT/CONF/M/3) to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water.

5. The Amendment Conference and the decisions which it would adopt could help to convince those Governments which had not yet done so to adhere to the Partial Test Ban Treaty. It would also strengthen and ensure the continued viability of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, particularly during the year in which the fourth conference to review the operation of that Treaty was scheduled to be held.

6. Mr. OKEYO (Kenya) welcomed the positive outcome of the recent negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, including the agreements to reduce their stockpiles of long-range nuclear weapons. Those agreements provided a good basis for the Amendment Conference and for other negotiations aimed at reducing the number of intercontinental strategic weapons and destroying all chemical weapons. His country joined other non-nuclear-weapon States in calling upon the two super-Powers to spare no efforts in the implementation of their agreed objectives.

7. The question of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty - the only effective way to halt the technological momentum of the nuclear-arms race - was of paramount importance. The conclusion of such a treaty would enhance the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

8. It was the pressure exerted by the non-nuclear-weapon States and anti-nuclear organizations which had led to the signing of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water. The principal aim of that Treaty, which had not yet been achieved, was the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time. The Partial Test Ban Treaty was not an end in itself, but a means to an end, namely, a comprehensive test ban in the overall context of general and complete disarmament.

9. The cessation of testing would strengthen the non-proliferation régime and provide an incentive for those States which had not yet done so to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. On the other hand, the failure to achieve a comprehensive test ban would increase the scepticism with which those States viewed the Treaty, and would have a negative impact on its future. He hoped, however, that the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty would give a strong impetus to the Amendment Conference to consider amendments to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water.

10. One of the contentious issues which impeded the conclusion of disarmament agreements was the so-called deterrence doctrine. Even the staunchest advocates of that theory would agree that since 1985 there had been a sustained improvement in the relations between East and West. In view of the recent political and ideological upheavals in Europe, it was time for a re-examination of the need for strategic alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

11. Another disputed issue was verification. Although verification was an integral part of arms limitation and disarmament agreements, it should never be used as a pretext for not pursuing the goal of a comprehensive test ban. In that connection, he drew attention to the positive contribution of the group of governmental experts on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification.

12. The current stage of the amendment effort testified to the commitment of many non-nuclear-weapon States to the achievement of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. Without their participation, the future of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons would be in jeopardy in 1995.

13. The PRESIDENT said that the Meeting had thus concluded the general exchange of views.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.